



March 6, 2017 | 9:00 – 11:00 am

10 Park Plaza, Boston | **Conference Rooms 5 & 6, behind the security desk on mezzanine level**

MEETING SUMMARY

Discussion:

Pat Field (CBI) opened the meeting at 9 AM and reviewed the agenda.

Discussion of alternative scenarios:

The group confirmed that both the surface and underpass scenarios for Rutherford Avenue/Sullivan Square would be carried through for the analysis of Alternatives 3 and 4.

Scott Peterson (CTPS) reviewed the components of Alternative 6. These included a new commuter rail stop on the Newburyport/Rockport line at Sullivan Square, the Green Line Extension II, and expanded BRT. The group discussed details of the proposed extension of the Silver Line BRT, which would have two branches with origin points in Glendale, North Station, Kendall, and Mystic Mall (the group had not yet determined the pairing of the branches.) Mr. Peterson explained that the lines would have approximately 15-minute headways on the branches and approximately 8-minute headways on the “trunk” of the route between Sweetser Circle and Sullivan Square. The group discussed the possibility of routing an exclusive pathway behind the Wynn Casino to avoid congestion on Route 99, partially on an existing MBTA right of way. The technical staff agreed to research this suggestion including exploring its feasibility with MBTA railroad operations. The group requested more detailed cost estimation for the proposed BRT expansions, including a breakdown of cost per leg, if possible. Carri Hulet (CBI) noted that the proposed Glendale to Sweetser Circle route was very popular among participants from community engagement discussion groups.

Group members discussed plans to include a “complete streets” component in Alternative 7. Members noted that bike/pedestrian improvements do have significant effects, though the models are not highly sensitive to them. The group agreed that modeling these improvements was a priority, despite the challenges of picking up shifts in the model.

In discussing possible changes to the Orange Line as part of Alternative 7 and the proposal for Alternative 8¹, Mr. Peterson explained that CTPS had discussed the possibility of decreased headways on the Orange Line with MBTA Orange Line Operations, and that the preliminary analysis suggested that with considerable investment, 3.5 minutes would be the fastest

¹ See the “alternatives cheat sheet,” v. February 10, for detailed descriptions of the Alternatives being considered to date.

possible headway. He reviewed that 4.5-minute headways were anticipated in the future with funding already committed.

The group discussed the proposal to model the Orange Line spur, going from Assembly to Glendale. Mr. Peterson reviewed that the proposal would require construction to build the spur as well as improved headways along the entire Orange Line. Group members suggested estimating the cost of construction and of improved headways separately. Group members discussed the potential impacts of the spur on the efficiency of the existing Orange Line due to increased crowding and longer headways. It was also noted that the priority of this proposal would depend to some extent on how the BRT options in Alternative 6 performed in the model, since the proposed BRT route would serve some of the same Everett neighborhoods. Group members noted that there is substantial development projected for the corridor this route would serve, and encouraged consideration of what additional development would be unlocked by this proposal. The group agreed to wait to decide whether to model this proposal until more information could be gathered.

Participants from MassDOT and CTPS noted that their offices were working to develop ball-park capital and operation cost estimates for highway and transit alternative proposals. They will update the group as they get more complete information.

Update on Discussion Groups:

Carri Hulet (CBI) updated the group on community engagement discussion groups that the community engagement team had run. Six had been run already, with one more planned in Everett. A brief presentation was also planned for the Charlestown Neighborhood Council, with the potential for another evening group being convened in March in Charlestown with the Office of Neighborhood Services. Over all, a good range of groups were represented at the meetings. Meeting participants showed general support for the alternatives being considered by the LMRWG. Some additional ideas were suggested by participants several times, including water transportation and the Orange Line spur. Participants encouraged a “revolutionary, not evolutionary” strategy to addressing mobility challenges in the study area, especially concerning bike/pedestrian infrastructure and development policy. Participants advocated that development policies should drive growth, rather than vice versa. Participants brought up concerns regarding environment, health, and livability related to congestion in the area. They suggested that the study incorporate responses to new technologies (e.g. driverless cars). Finally, Ms. Hulet noted that participants had many questions and strong interest concerning Rutherford Avenue, and that the focus on plans for that area warranted continued care to avoid confusion between Boston’s Rutherford Avenue study and the LMRWG study.

Discussion of research on funding options:

Chris Kuschel (MAPC) introduced the discussion on a framework of funding options to the group. He explained that the group was instructed in the study scope to suggest funding options for proposals it recommends. He noted that the core staff recommended an approach to provide a menu of funding options as part of the report, rather than tying proposals to funding sources specifically. He outlined federal, state, and MBTA funding sources known to the

group. He suggested more research and discussion on municipal funding options, value capture tools, regional mitigation funds, and public-private partnerships. Marc Draisen (MAPC) suggested that there is a strong opportunity to leverage more private funding through various mechanisms. David Mohler (MassDOT) noted that the research to prepare recommendations for the group should consider limitations on what funds would be available (e.g., current legislation specifies that tolling can only be used on toll facilities). He also emphasized the need to assure that options pursued as recommendations aligned with MassDOT's and other members' priorities for funding.

Group members encouraged an analysis that accounts for the regional reach of the benefits of some of the proposals when considering from what sources to draw funds.

Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) Community Mitigation Funds:

John Ziemba (MGC) provided an overview on the MGC's community mitigation funds (CMF). He explained that the CMF has two sources of revenue: one-time license fees that casino licensees give the MGC, and a share of tax revenue that comes from casinos as they operate. The gross revenue of the casinos is taxed at 25%. Estimates for that revenue in 2019 are \$250-300M per year. 6.5% of that tax goes to the CMF. The purpose of the CMF is to address unanticipated infrastructure issues across that state that arise as a result of the casinos, and that are not dealt with through the MEPA process or by surrounding community agreements. The MGC has the authority to decide how the funds are spent. The MGC currently funds studies and design rather than construction. Mr. Ziemba also noted that MassDOT receives 15% of the taxes on the gross gaming revenue.

The meeting was adjourned at 11 AM.